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Message Text

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12
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 DODE-00 OMB-01 L-03 H-02 MC-02 ACDA-05 SAJ-01

EUR-12 ARA-06 EA-07 AF-06 /089 W
---------- 130674
R 170500Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
59 473#:/SECSTATE WASHDC 7376
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSU JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SANA 0540

E.O. 116
6, GDS
TAGS: MASS, YE
SUBJECT: YAR ARMS

REF: SANA 477

SUMMARY ASNAJ PROVIDES MORE BACKGROUND ON YARG
ATTITUDES RE ARMS.

1. IN CONVERSATION ON FEBRUARY 12 WITH YARG FONMIN
ABDALLAH AL-ASNAJ CHARGE WENT OVER, IN GENERAL WAY AS IN
REFTEL, PRESENT STAGE OF ARMS EFFORTS BY USG FOR YARG.
PROVIDED NO DETAILS, BUT SAID I PLEASED WE GETTING
INTO DETAILS OF PURCHASES AND TRAINING. SAID SAUDI PLAN
WAS IMPRESSIVE EVIDENCE SAUDI MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM
AND GOOD WILL TOWARD YARG.

2. ASNAJ SAID THIS WAS GOOD NEWS, WHICH PARALLELED
NEWS FROM SAUDIS. HE SAID HE WAS VERY PLEASED.
HE SAID HE HAD HEARD SAUDIS WERE EXPEDITING RESIDENCE
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OF MILITARY MISSION HERE. HE SAID SAUDI POLICY HAD

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UNDERGONE DRAMATIC CHANGE FROM "SEARCH" FOR
"WEAK AND DIVIDED YEMEN" TO "SUPPORT FOR STRONG
AND FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT IN SANAA". YEMENIS EXPECTED NO LESS, BUT
GRATEFUL AND PLEASED. THEY WOULD RECIPROCATE.

3. THEN, ASNAJ SAID HE WANTED TO WARN USG ABOUT
POSSIBILITY OF "SETBACKS".

4. HE SAID THAT YEMENI HAD BEEN IN PRESENT STAGE
OF DISCUSSIONS RE ARMS FROM SUADIS AT LEAST TWICE
BEFORE. AND WOULD HAVE "DOUBTS ABOUT ANYTHING
MATERIALIZING" UNTIL NEW SHIPMENTS BEGAN ACTUALLY
TO ARRIVE. SAUDIS, HE SAID, MOVED SLOWLY POINTED TO MODERN
1.) MM HOWITIZERS WHICH NOW SAUDIS HAVE SHIPPED HIM. ASNAJ NODDED AND
SAID THEY CAME WITHOUT AMMO.

5. HE ALSO SAID THAT HAMDI, ON HIS VISIT TO SUDAN,
HAD BEEN IMPRESSED WITH SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT
OF MOST MODERN SORT WHICH IS THERE, APPARENTLY WITHOUT
OBJECTION FROM SAUDIS. HAMDI, HE SAID, WOULD SEE
SAME THING IN EGYPT LATER THIS MONTH ON OFFICIAL
VISIT THERE.

6. HE THEN SPOKE AT SOME LENGTH, AT FIRST ELLIPTICALLY
AND THEN MORE BLUNTLY, ABOUT WHAT HE REAGRDS AS FRAILITIES
OF USG FOREIGN POLICY. HE SAID CONGRESS SEEMED TO BE
ABLE TO CHECK THE PRESIDENT, AND SEEMED WANT TO
MOVE TO ALTER WHOLE POSTURE OF UZIFOREIGN POLICY
OF LAST TWO DECADES. CONGRESSIONAL EFFORT
SEEMED TO BE SUPPORTED BY NATIONAL MOOD IN US. SOVIETS,
BY CONTRAST, SEEMED TO BE WILLING FILL RESULTING
VOID WITH REDOUBLED EFFORTS. WHAT WAS HAPPENING
IN ANGOLA, SAID ASNAJ, WAS LIKELY TO HAPPEN SHORTLY
IN DJIBOUTI, AFTER FRENCH LEFT. THEN SOMALI FORCES
WELL ARMED AND CLAIMING REVOLUTIONARY AND REACIAL
MOTIVES, WOULD TAKE OVER WITH A LOT OF HELP FROM
CUBANS, NORTH KOREANS, NORTH VIETNAMESE. CUBANS
AND SOVIETS WERE STRENGTHENING PDRY, HAD POTENTIAL
FOR CREATING TROUBLE IN YAR.

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7. I SAID SITUATION IN ARABIAN PENINSULA WAS
DIFFERENT. USG HAD PROVED MANY TIMES TO BE
DEPENDABLE FRIEND OF YARG. USG ALSO HAS LEADING ROLE
IN MIDDLE EAST WHICH HAS MADE EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESSES
POSSIBLE IN LAST SEVERAL YEARS. ARAB FRIEND SHOULD
NOT BE DECEIVED ABOUT DEBATE IN US. OUR INTERESTS
IN MIDDLE EAST WERE CLEAR AND WOULD BE PROSECUTED
FORCEFULLY. MOREOVER, SAUDIS HAD, AS ASNAJ HIMSELF

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SAID, ADOPTED NEW POLICY TOWARD YEMEN AND WERE
NOW PURSUING IT WITH GREAT GOOD WILL, TENACITY AND
IN MY VIEW ALL POSSIBLE SPEED. SAID THT, FINALLY,
I ASSUMED NO RPT NO NEED TELL ASNAJ, AFTER HIS EXPERIENCE
IN SOUTH YEMEN, THAT ROAD TO CHANGING AND IMPROVING
SITUATION THERE WAS BY SETTING TOUGH CONDITIONS AND
INSISTING ON IMPLEMENTATION. ANY OTHER KIND OF
ACCOMMODATION WITH SOUTH,SOR WITH ITS SOVIET-SUPPORTERS
DID NOT SEEM TO ME TO PROMISE ANYTHING GOOD FOR YARG
SECURITY.

8. ASNAJ SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS, ACCEPTED IT. WHATTJ
USG HAD TO REALI
ZE, HE SAID, WAS THAT YEMEN WAS A
"LIABILITY" TO US AND SAUDIS, AND WOULD BE UNTIL IT
COULD FINANCE ITSELF. IT NEEDED A LOLUOF SUPPORT.
IN MEANTIME, IT WAS "NOT A CLIENT".

9. ASNAJ THEN SAID HE WANTED TO STATE ONCE AGAIN WHAT
HE HAD EARLIER TOLD AMBASSADOR SCOTES ABTVUT SOVIET
ARMS DELIVERIES. TO MAKE SURE HE HAD NOT RPT
NOT MISLEAD AMBASSADOR, OR BEEN MISLEAD HIMSELF, HE HAD
"CHECKED MATTER". THERE WAS NORPT NO NEW ARMS AGREE-
MENT WITH SOVIETS, HE SAID FIRMLY. NOTHINGGJ
HAD BEEN SIGNED. WHEN ABD
AL ?8. 23.:029 .9OSCOW
MARSHALL GRECHKO STAGED A DINNER AT WHICH HZLN
GRENCHKO PRODUCED AN ARMS REQUESTED WHICH HAD
BEEN PREVIOUSLY PREPARED BY MUHSIN AL-WUNI.
AL-AYNI, SAID ASNJ, WAS ALWAYS TOO CLEVER
BY HALF. HE HAD SOLD YARG ON IDEA OF VERY LONG
AND SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT REQUEST ON GROUNDS THAT
SOVIETS WOULD SURELY REJECT IT. GRECHKO, HOWEVER,
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TOLD ABDALALIM THAT LIST WAS APPROVED. THERE
WAS CONDITION: SHIPMENTS OF MOST NEW EQUIPMENT WOULD
BEGIN AFTER HAMDI VISITED MOSCOW, EVEN FOR TWO
DAYS. MEANWHILE SHIPMENTCGF OLD AND SOME NEW RPT
AND SOME NEW EQUIPMENT WOULD BEGIN AT ONCE.

10. WHEN FIRST SHIP ARRIVED LAST MONTH FROM
USSR, SAID ASNAJ, SOVIETS WANTED TO MAKE A "BIG
EXHIBITION" OF UNLOADING IT. YARG REFUSED AND
SOVIETS TRIED GET REVERSAL. GHASHMI WENT DOEN

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NSAE-00 DODE-00 OMB-01 L-03 H-02 MC-02 ACDA-05 SAJ-01

EUR-12 ARA-06 EA-07 AF-06 /089 W
---------- 112121
R 170500Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7377
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 SANA 0540

TO HODEIDA AND TOLD SOVIETS EITHER TO UNLOAD IT
OR MOVE IT, AS IT BLOCKING PORT. FINALLY, AFTER
THINGS UNLOADED, SOVIET MOVED SHIP.

1. ACCORDING TO UK AMBASSADOR, WHO SAY ASNAJ
IMMEDIATELY AFTER ME, ASNAG STORY WAS SLIGHTLY
DIFFERENT. SHIP CONTAINED TWO CARGOES,
ONE FOR YEMEN WITH OLD STUFF AND ONE OTHER CARGO WHICH
EVENTUALLY WENT ELSEWHAER BUT WHICH SOVIETS WANTED
TO SHOW YEMENIS (MIG-21S, T-54'S) AND SOMEHOW SUGGESTED
THEY WOULD UNLOAD IN PORT IF YEMENIS WANTED. GHASHMI
SAID UNLOAD IT OR MOVE THE SHIP. SOVIETS MOVED
THE SHIP, ASNAJ THOUGHT TO ADEN.

12. I PROBABLY DIDN'T GET THIS TORY BECAUSE
I DID NOT RPT NOT INQUIRE ABOUT MIG-21S OR OTHER NEW
EQUIPMENT, PER INSTRUCTIONS. I DID SAY, HOWEVER, SUCH
ITEMS HAD DOUBLE IMPORTANCE. FIRST, THEY WERE
SYMBOLS OF SOVIET ROLE AND MILITARY PROWESS OF YARG.
FRIENDS OF YEMEN WERE INTERESTED IN BOTH. IN ADDITION,
THEY WERE LITMUS TEST OF YARG CREDIBILITY. WE HAD
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BEEN TOLD CLEARLY AND REPEATEDLY THAT THESE ITEMS
NOT RPT NOT NOW COMING. IF THEY ARRIVED, QUESTION
OF CONFIDENCE WOULD BE CREATED. WE HOPED TO BE TOLD IN
ADVANCE IF YARG EXPECTATIONS CHANGED. AS POTENTIAL
ARMS SUPPLIER, WE NEEDED AND WANTED COMPLETELY
FRANK AND CLEAR RELATIONSHIP.

13. ASNAJ DID NOT DEMUR, AND SAID ONLY HE WAS
REPORTING FACTS AS HE KNEW THEM.

14. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH TALK TOUCHED FRANKLY ON
SOME SENSITIVE ISSUES--"FRAILITIES" OF USG
POLICY AND CREDIBILITY OF YARG--ASNAJ WAS IN
REFLECTIVE MOOD AND WAS AS WARM AND SELF-POSSESSED
AS EVER. I THINK HE IS TELLING US TRUTH
AS HE KNOWS IT.

15. HOWEVER, WE NOW HAVE FOUR STORIES ABOUT THE
SOVIET ARMS DEAL.

16. FIRST, AS ASNAJ TELLS IT, THERE IS NO DEAL, AND
THE ONLY THINGS COMING ARE OLD THINGS. SECOND, AS
GHASHMI TELLS IT, THE SOVIETS SENT MIG-21'S AND
TANKS BUT AT LAST MINUTE THEY REFUSED DELIVER THEM
BECAUSE OF SUSPICION AND ANGER RE SAUDI MILITARY
MISSION. THIRD, AS HAMDI TELLING SAUDIS, (ACCORDING
TO UK EMBASSY HERE, WHICH ASKED TO CHECK STORY) THE
NEW EQUIPMENT ARRIVED BUT HAMDI TOLD THEM TO CARRY
OT AWAY. (UK EMBASSY HAS GIVEN SAUDIS VERY QUALIFIED
INDICATION THAT LATTER MAY BE TRUE.) FOURTH,
WE HAVE UNILATERALL USG REPORTS THAT AGREEMENTS FOR
MASSIVE SHIPMENTS ARE SIGNED, THE WQUIPMENT IS ON
ITS WAY OR SCHEDULED FOR DELIVERY, THE FIRST SHIP
BROUGHT NO MORE AND NO LESS THAN EXPECTED.

17. I HAVE HELD THIS REPORT IN HOPES THAT IN
LAST FOUR DAYS, WE COULD COME UP WITH MORE
OR BETTER INFORMATION WHICH WOULD ALLOW US MAKE
INFORMED GUESS ABOUT THE FOUR STORIES ABOVE.
SO FAR, THAT SILL REMAINS ONLY A HOPE. I THINK
WE SHOULD ASK FOR SAUDI VIEWS.
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18. IN ANY CASE, SOVIETS ARE I THINK AT LEAST AS
UNSURE OF THEIR FOOTING AND THE FACTS HERE AS WE ARE, AND I AM
CONVINCED THAT WE CAN TURN OFF OR REDUCE FLOW OF
MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM THEM IF RPT IF WE CAN
MOUNT A CREDIBLE ALTERNATIVE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SANA00540
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760060-0361
From: SANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760243/aaaablje.tel
Line Count: 276
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 SANA 477
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <31 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: YAR ARMS
TAGS: MASS, YE, US, (AL-ASNAG, ABDULLAH)
To: n/a
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006